

Cardiff here

we come!

MARATHON ENDS
AS EVANS AND
BULLOCK STRIKE

AFTER two absorbing draws with Bedford, Wycombe Wanderers finally earned their chance of a visit to Third Division Cardiff on December 13 when they clinched last night's (Monday) F.A. Cup first round second replay at Loakes Park.

This is the fifth time Wanderers have reached the second round and they did it with a display of real character. On a pitch lashed by rain both before and during the game, they adapted themselves to the alien conditions and deservedly won the tie, which was threatening to repeat history. In 1966 Wanderers had four games with Bedford at the same stage of the

same competition before the Eagles finally ran out winners. Nine years later, Wycombe took their revenge.

The conditions threatened to make this all-important second replay a game of chance. But all credit goes to the Blues for their performance for it was Wycombe

must count themselves a little unfortunate to go out on such a night. The driving wind and rain really did make life difficult.

The goalscoring heroes on the night were Dave Bullock and Dylan Evans but Wycombe's triumph was earned by a team performance and none of the 12 players used gave under 100 per cent. Paul Birdseye, John

night's game while John Delaney returned to the Wycombe side after a troublesome eye injury.

On a pitch that was soon cutting up after the battering from the rain, Wanderers were soon pressing forward. Howard Kennedy tested Ray Peacock with a long range effort and then Geoff Anthony floated a cross over to Tony Horseman in the fifth minute. Thinking he was offside, Wycombe's top scorer

By STUART EARP Wycombe Wanderers 2, Bedford Town 1

who took hold of the match and made it theirs. They knew full well that mistakes could decide the game and by playing simply and sticking to their attacking policy, they deservedly took the honours.

However, one must sympathise with Southern League Bedford. They proved perfectly matched in the two previous games and they

Delaney, Howard Kennedy and substitute Dave Alexander deserved special mention for outstanding performances and it was rich reward for Bullock, an excellent servant to Wycombe Wanderers, to get his name on the scoresheet with that all important first goal.

Bedford, who drew 2-2 at Grantham on Saturday while Wycombe were losing at Slough, were without pacerman Peter Phillips, a 'flu victim, for last

checked for a second — long enough for Peacock to race out and block the shot.

By leaving only two men upfront, Bedford subjected themselves to a good deal of pressure in the first half and they seldom ventured out of their own half as Wycombe pressed forward at every opportunity. Anthony had a shot blocked and then Bullock crashed a thunderous drive wide. Meanwhile John Maskell had

only to collect the occasional back pass from his defence.

Evans, who had his best game for some time, produced one swerving run that took him past three defenders inside the Bedford box but the ball was eventually cleared for a corner. From the flag kick Anthony's low cross was driven hard by Mick Holifield, but Peacock flung himself full length to save. Another corner quickly followed and this time Keith Mead was only inches wide at the far post.

Bedford took until the 33rd minute to force some sort of reply when Glen Burdett sent in a 20 yard shot which John Maskell saved well. By half time, the Blues must have been well pleased with their performance — but there was still no goals.

Wanderers again took the honours at the start of the second half but Bedford, as they did in the first game at Loakes Park, looked more confident having held their opponents for 45 minutes. They hit back with their best spell of the game when they forced three corners in five minutes but Wycombe successfully weathered the storm.

Manager Brian Lee brought on Dave Alexander for Anthony after 45 minutes and within a minute, the Blues had opened their account. Kennedy, who moved into the forward line on Alexander's arrival, won a corner which Horseman drove into the box. Peacock dropped the ball and the intended clearance hit another player and ballooned across goal. Bullock met the ball perfectly and looped a 12 yard header over a massed defence and into the empty net. Bedford claimed the goal was lucky afterwards but there was no luck about the way it was taken by the Wycombe full back.

The goal put a totally different complexion on the game. It meant Bedford had to press forward a lot more while Wanderers must have been tempted to hang onto their slender lead. Bedford did come forward too and it took a hasty clearance from Howard Kennedy to stop Gary Sargent scoring after 73 minutes.

Then, after 75 minutes, the inevitable mistake brought a goal. Norman Cooley, one of two Bedford survivors from the 1966 matches against Wycombe, tried to pass back to his goalkeeper but Evans intercepted and ran into the box. Dylan took the ball round Peacock and then steadied himself before tapping home.

Still Wanderers were not satisfied. A delicate nudge by Horseman laid on another chance four minutes later but Peacock held Evans' ground shot well. For an instant it seemed Bedford might be overrun but they pulled themselves off the floor and hit back strongly.

The home players must have felt the tension as Bedford struggled to keep an interest in the game — an interest that was rekindled with a goal in the 83rd minute. Maskell seemed to have gathered a cross from the bottom wing but as Sargent challenged, he lost the ball and Leo Markham pounced to snap up the half chance with a crisp shot into the corner.

Bedford forced one more corner in a bid to hold their opponents for a third time but Wycombe finished the stronger side. Kennedy, revelling in his forward role and helped by Alexander, kept the Blues pushing forward until referee Clive White, who had another fine game, brought this exciting cup tie to a close.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, D. Bullock, K. Mead, J. Delaney, P. Birdseye, H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holifield, A. Horseman, D. Evans, G. Anthony (sub D. Alexander 66 mins.).

BEDFORD: R. Peacock, D. Skinn, T. Gould, N. Cooley, R. Folds, P. Hawkins, L. Markham, D. Earl, G. Burdett (sub R. Shreeves 78 mins.), J. Campbell, G. Sargent.

Referee: C. White (Harrow).

Half time: 0-0. **Goalscorers,** Wycombe — Bullock (67), Evans (75). Bedford — Markham (83).

Official paying attendance: 2,710.